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July 8, 2020

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chairman
House Committee on Finance
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HB 7624

Dear Chairman Abney:

I write today in support of HB 7624 which would mandate staffing standards, increase the quality of care provided in nursing homes, and hold nursing homes accountable for compliance.

As Attorney General, one of my most important responsibilities is ensuring and advocating for the health and safety of Rhode Islanders, particularly our most vulnerable residents.

Rhode Island is one of only a handful of states not to have a nursing home staffing standard. Consequently, our State ranks near the bottom of the national average for hours of care provided to nursing home residents. Many falls, infections, and other injuries can be prevented by ensuring that health care workers are spending the time we know nursing home residents need to be safe and well cared for. This legislation also supports hard-working nursing home staff, helping them fulfill their mission to provide quality and compassionate care.


By establishing a much-needed standard, the legislation also provides for better accountability. The reporting, monitoring, and fines for non-compliance should ensure that nursing homes maintain safe staffing levels, provide training to staff, and ultimately provide better care to their residents.

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis has only further illustrated the need to ensure that our nursing homes adhere to national standards and best practices. In Rhode Island, over 720 nursing home residents have died from COVID-19, accounting for over 70% of all COVID-19-related deaths in the State. This is devastating for our community. We must do everything that we can to ensure that our nursing homes adhere to the highest safety standards and provide the level of care our residents deserve.

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As such, I urge this Committee and the entire House to support this important legislation. I thank Representative Slater for sponsoring it, and the Committee for considering my comments.

Sincerely,



Peter F. Neronha
Attorney General

CC: House Committee on Finance